

18. *On some of the Accidents produced by the Development of the Wisdom-Teeth.* By M. ROBERT.—The four last molars, vulgarly termed “wisdom-teeth,” frequently cause, by reason of their slow development, various accidents which the treatises on surgery pass by almost without notice. An interesting and useful monograph might be written upon the subject.

The teeth are short and broad, and have short and straight fangs. They seem to remain behind the others, both in regard to their dimensions and the period of their apparition; so that at first sight, these teeth, which seem to have, so to say, undergone a commencing atrophy, might be expected to make their appearance without inducing irritation. But there are various circumstances which may render this difficult or even dangerous. Thus, it often happens that at the period of the evolution of the large molar it is found to have undergone deviation. As it is always cut at a late period, the other teeth, situated in front, compress its follicle, and distort and thrust back its alveolus. The tooth is thus often found deviating in front or behind, within or outwards. So great is the deviation that the alveolus is occasionally found hollowed out in the ramus of the jaw, the tooth having undergone such a reversion that its crown abuts directly against that of the second great molar. It is easy to see that the eccentric movement executed by the wisdom-tooth at the moment of its evolution, may become, as regards the neighbouring teeth, the jaw, mouth, gums, or even itself, the source of various more or less serious accidents, such as osteitis, periostitis, necrosis, inflammation of the soft parts, etc. This will be easily understood, if we consider the enormous power exerted by the tooth, the effects of which cannot be better compared than to those exerted by water, which, infiltrated into the crevices of rocks, violently separates their fragments, on expanding during congelation.

To these accidents of an inflammatory nature, must be added another, which is hardly ever absent, and which often exists alone during a variable period, viz., the pains that sometimes last for months or years, and depend solely upon the development of the wisdom-tooth. This persistent pain is a nearly certain sign of chronic inflammation caused by obstructed evolution; but sometimes this phlegmasia, under the influence of some slight appreciable cause, or sometimes without any appreciable cause at all, may become transformed into acute inflammation, giving rise to various serious affections of the hard or soft parts, as necrosis, periostitis, abscess, etc. Abscess may form either at the exterior of the jaw, or towards the mouth, whence the pus detaching the muscles and aponeuroses, may descend to the neck. In a case of Bérard's, the pus of an abscess which had formed in the mouth, descended to the subclavicular region, constituting a true migratory abscess, from the effects of which the patient succumbed. Sometimes it is on the side of the throat that the inflammatory symptoms are manifested, and then the enlarged tonsils may have to be excised. In other cases it is towards the velum or the uvula that the inflammation is directed. Thus, an instance occurred to the author in which this was the case, and the hypertrophied uvula, hanging upon the base of the tongue, gave rise to anorexia and vomiting, and other symptoms, which during several months gave rise to the belief in an affection of the stomach. They arose, however, from the inflammation excited by evolution of a wisdom-tooth; and when analogous symptoms are present, at an age in which such evolution takes place, its possibility should always be borne in mind.

These observations were suggested to M. Robert by the presence in his wards of three persons in whom the development of the wisdom-tooth had given rise to various accidents. One of these was a delicate youth of 22, who had suffered from severe pains in the mouth during several weeks. In the furrow between the cheek and the anterior border of the ascending ramus was a vast and very painful ulcerated surface, covered with a whitish deposit; and, lower down, the gum behind the third molar was likewise painful and swollen. The ulceration had been caused and kept up by the swelling of the gum, which itself depended upon the development of the wisdom-tooth. It was proposed to modify the condition of the ulcer by means of fuming nitric acid, and to freely excise the gum over the tooth. In the second case, a woman, aged 22 or 23, had suffered severe pains at the angle of the jaw during two years, and had every now and then

inflammation and abscess in the vicinity. The gum had been incised with temporary relief, and now, after a severe attack of inflammation had been subdued, the tooth was found to be partially through, the gum which covered the remainder being ulcerated. This was excised, and the symptoms all subsided. In the third case, a robust man, aged 32, had suffered from his mouth, at the point corresponding to the last molar, during two years. Abscess, followed by an obstinate fistulous opening, occurred: but as the fistula opened near the chin, and all the teeth were sound, even an experienced dentist had not suspected the true cause. Another dentist, recognizing the nature of the case, drew the second molar, in order to give room for this new one, but without avail. The patient then came to M. Robert, who at once recognized that he had a dental fistula. These fistulae have, in fact, their peculiarities, being slightly depressed, with the skin around them plaited or wrinkled, and when lying on the lower jaw frequently adhering to the bone. The fistula was traced back with a probe to the tooth, and the latter having been extracted, recovery soon took place.—*Med. Times and Gaz.*, Nov. 12, from *Gaz. des Hôp.*, No. 8.

19. *Hereditariness of the Epilepsy induced in the Guinea-Pig.*—One of the most interesting facts among those discovered by M. Brown-Séquard, is the production of epilepsy in the mammalia, and especially the guinea-pig, as a consequence of certain lesions of the spinal cord. He has frequently repeated these experiments, and with the same results. At a recent meeting of the Biological Society he related the results of the observations he had made during several years upon the young ones born of parents thus rendered epileptic. In some of these he has met with a very distinct epileptiform affection, with well characterized paroxysms, but differing somewhat from the epilepsy of the parents. In the latter, not only are there spontaneous paroxysms, but others may be induced at will, by irritating or pinching the skin of the face; but in the pigs which appear to derive their convulsive affection from their parents, paroxysms cannot be induced in this manner; while the form of those occurring spontaneously is not exactly the same. The animal is first seized with trembling, and then falling on its flank it agitates its limbs spasmodically. The young pigs thus affected have proceeded in about an equal number from epileptic mothers and fathers. Sometimes parents thus rendered epileptic by myelo-traumatism produce little ones, none of whom exhibit the affection, or while some do, others do not. M. Brown-Séquard has had under his observation a very large number of guinea-pigs, and while not denying the possibility of the fact, he has never seen a single animal present an analogous convulsive affection, unless it had previously undergone a lesion of the medulla, or was the offspring of a parent who had been rendered epileptic in this manner.—*Med. Times and Gaz.*, Nov. 12, from *Gazette Hebdomadaire*.

20. *Hypodermic Treatment of Disease.*—MR. CHAS. HUNTER, late house-surgeon to St. George's Hospital, has published (*Med. Times and Gaz.*, Sept. 10) some interesting remarks on this subject with cases and experiments. The cases detailed are fifteen in number, including two in which the local injection of Dr. Wood was first tried. "A brief review of the cases is the more satisfactory for these reasons—1stly, because in all of them the same narcotic, the acetate of morphia, was used; 2dly, because they had all been under other treatment previously without avail, and in most of the cases it was the same preparation, administered either by the stomach, or skin, which had previously failed.

All the cases were affections of the *nervous system*; nine of the brain, two of the brain and spinal cord, and four of particular nerves.

Although a narcotic, and the same narcotic, was used in every case, it was not always with the same object; thus, in some it was to procure sleep, in others, to ease pain or allay spasm, and in others, again, to attempt to palliate or cure some neuralgic affection.

Three of the cases were *neuralgia*, which had all failed to receive benefit under other treatment, although in each case it had been very varied. The two first received great benefit, firstly, from Dr. Wood's plan, and subsequently